

Bulletin

FEBRUARY 12th, 1948

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Inaugural Address of Dr. E. D. Friedman

The BULLETIN is very proud to be able to print in its entirety the inaugural address of Dr. E. D. Friedman, newly elected president of the Synagogue, which was made at the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 11th, 1948.

IT is needless for me to say that I appreciate greatly the honor which you have bestowed upon me, and it is a high privilege for me to share with you in the spiritual leadership of our congregation. It has established itself, largely as the result of the leadership of Rabbi Milton Steinberg, as one of the most dynamic forces in behalf of the Jewish heritage that exists in our city and perhaps in America.

In accepting this honor, it is appropriate for me to give voice to my philosophy of life so that the congregation may know something of my approach to Judaism.

It has always been my belief that Judaism is neither religion alone nor peoplehood alone,—hence, I cannot see eye to eye with either old line reformism or purely secular nationalism. With regard to the first, I need only refer to the pseudo-liberalism of the German reform movement which, about a century ago, in an unreasoning burst of enthusiasm over admission of Jews to participation in German life, sold its birthright for less than a mess of pottage. To the early

Dr. L. M. Birkhead To Speak on Propaganda At Evening Service, February 20th



Dr. L. M. Birkhead

reformers, the millenium was at hand and only the diluted universalism of the prophets was worth while retaining as a symbol of Judaism. And so they stripped our traditions of much of their poetry, they abandoned the ritual references to Zion as the spiritual center of the Jewish people, and called themselves German citizens of the Mosaic faith,—represented in modern Germany under Hitler by the Naumann group of inglorious memory.

Due to the spirit of enlightenment at the time of the birth of reform about a century ago, some daring spirits in the ghettos of Eastern Europe attempted to emancipate themselves from extreme or-

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Dr. L. M. Birkhead, National Director of the Friends of Democracy, will be guest lecturer at the Friday evening service of February 20th, in the Synagogue's commemoration of the annual Brotherhood Week. Dr. Birkhead's subject will be "The War on the Propaganda Front."

Dr. Birkhead founded the Friends of Democracy in the early 1930's, when he clearly recognized the threat of fascism and nazism to the democratic way of life. He was at that time pastor of All Souls Unitarian Church, Kansas City, Mo., and after making a number of trips to Europe to study the situation at first hand, he resigned his pulpit and became associated with the Friends of Democracy exclusively. Dr. Birkhead's remarks on the dangers of fascism have been outspoken, and prior to the war, he engaged in frequent controversy with the representatives of various fascist nations in this country.

Dr. Birkhead has worked with some of the outstanding anti-fascist personalities of our times, including John Roy Carlson, author of "Undercover," Sinclair Lewis, Thomas Mann, and Russell Davenport.

Dr. Birkhead has always followed the tack that all propaganda should be exposed for what it is, and he has done exactly this with both the ideologies of the Right and the Left. He claims that in many instances one or the other profits by the attack made upon its opposite by a well-meaning but ignorant public opinion. Unless the believers in democracy truly understand what this battle of the ideologies is, they will be annihilated without even being able to fight in their own defense.

Dr. Birkhead has been characterized as one of the nation's outstanding lecturers. One of his hearers spoke of him thus: "He looks like Franklin, talks like Paine, and fights like Washington."

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sabbath Eve Friday, February 13th, 8:30 p.m.

Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer will preach on
"American Overture—A Study of Jewish Political Rights."

Sabbath Eve Friday, February 20th, 8:30 p.m.

Dr. L. M. Birkhead will speak on
"The War on the Propaganda Front."

Sabbath Morning Saturday Mornings, 10:00 a.m.

Bachurim Group at 10:00 a.m.; Junior Congregation Service at 11:00 a.m.

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Vol. 2

No. 9

From the Desk of Rabbi Kertzer

ON Friday evening, January 30th, I spoke of our role in the present Palestine crisis, and the editors of the BULLETIN have asked me to indicate some of the dominant thoughts of my message.

I said frankly, that the length of the list of Jewish dead that will appear in the newspapers during the next three or four months depends, not on the stoutness of heart of the Maccabean defenders, not on the sympathy and good-will of the United Nations, but on our ability to give those defenders *now—this week, next week, next month*—the physical means to defend themselves. The Jewish people cannot afford any Pearl Harbors or Dunkirks. Our reserves are far from inexhaustible.

Several congregants, experiencing a deep sense of frustration because they *want* to aid their brothers in the battle of survival, but do not know how to harness their energy and their emotions to a concrete line of action, have asked me to be specific. Here are a few concrete suggestions:

1. Let the President, and members of Congress know that in this critical election year we will expect that they will implement America's actions at Flushing Meadows. As one of our congregants wrote me, a statement from Governor Dewey can be a strong weapon in our arsenal of defense.

2. Use every power of persuasion to have the arms embargo lifted, so that *Haganah* can at least be treated on an

equal basis with the Arab attackers.

3. Contribute funds to the Defense campaigns. We at the Synagogue will be more than happy to channelize contributions in the right direction. Don't make out a check without finding out the legitimacy of the cause.

4. The defenders of Palestine need clothing, tents, sweaters, and any number of quartermaster items necessary for a military campaign. It is possible to meet this critical need in a perfectly legitimate manner by sending a check to "Materials for Palestine, Inc." We shall be glad to supply further information in this direction.

Finally, it is my firm conviction, that only if American public opinion is persuaded of the justice of our cause will our State Department abide by the United Nations' decision. We must be on the alert against distortion of the picture by either an ignorant press or a prejudiced one. I have not hesitated to write to newspapers guilty of betraying the cause of justice in covering the tragic events of Palestine today.

Above all, let us catch something of the mood and spirit of *Yishuv* itself. The Jewish people have long been inured to tribulations. With the resolution born out of a full realization that we struggle in a righteous cause—with a faith born out of our confidence in the goodness of Providence, we shall surely see the day when "Zion shall dwell secure".

—MORRIS N. KERTZER

Will You Attend?

Sunday, February 15th, 3:15 p.m. —
Junior League Dance — Vestry.

Tuesday, February 17th, 1:00 p.m. —
Sisterhood 1948 Birthday Party —
Vestry.

Wednesday, February 18th, 8:30 p.m.—
Young Marrieds — Group B — at the
home of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Brandt,
601 West 110th, N.Y.C.

Wednesday, February 24th, 8:30 p.m. —
Meeting of the Ritual Committee.

Thursday, February 25th, 8:30 p.m. —
Home Study "Law Group" — at the
home of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Falk,
40 West 86th St., N.Y.C.

Thursday, February 25th, 8:30 p.m. —
Young Marrieds — Group A — at the
home of Mr. and Mrs. George Lyttle,
40 East 88th St., N. Y. C.; Mr. and
Mrs. Robert Satter will be hosts.

MEN'S CLUB PLANS FOR REACTIVATION

Temporary Committees Named

The Men's Club of the Park Avenue Synagogue, a long awaited development in our communal life, is about ready to join the family of organizations of the Synagogue. The Men's Club, which once played a very active role in Synagogue life, has long been missed and its reactivation upon the Synagogue scene is eagerly awaited.

A group of men, constituting a preliminary steering committee, is busy organizing ideas and suggestions that will be presented to all the men of the Congregation early in April. This committee would heartily accept any other ideas and suggestions from fellow-members of the congregation for an improved Men's Club.

The Steering Committee has elected temporary officers during the organization of the Men's Club. Victor J. Herwitz, has been named as Chairman. Drs. Leon Finley and Harold Osserman have been designated Vice-Chairmen while Milton Sivek and Harold Starkman will serve as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.

To help facilitate matters and to present concrete ideas temporary committees have been appointed: Program Committee,—Chairman, Henry Koch, and Abraham Cohen, Moe Gale, Maxwell Lieberman and Dudley L. Greenstein; Membership Committee, — Chairman, Herman Baskind, and Dr. Arthur Morse, Jacob Boorstein, Henry Howe, Louis I. Heller and Gilbert Helman; Civic Affairs Committee, — Chairman, Dr. Ira Fink and Milton Grass; Organization Committee,—Chairman, Joseph H. Katz, and Irvin Waldman; Hospitality Committee —Chairman, Dr. J. J. Marquith, and Milton Heller and Archie Thurman.

The Men's Club is being formed to enable members of the congregation to become better acquainted with each other, and to provide a means of learning more about communal affairs. Only when the organization is formally established in the near future will permanent officers be elected and committees chosen.

Any member of the Synagogue who would like to participate in the organization of the Men's Club is asked to contact either Mr. Herwitz or Rabbi Kertzer.

Sisterhood Speaks

The Sisterhood cordially invites its members to the 1948 Birthday Party which takes place on Tuesday, February 17th at 1 p.m. at the Synagogue. Mrs. Grace Gilbert and Mrs. Irma Heller are the co-chairmen on arrangements. An entertaining musical program has been planned, with Nicki Galpeer as a special treat, singing some Brazilian and American songs.

Nicki Galpeer has just exclusively recorded several songs by the Brazilian composer who recently received the \$5000 award from the League of Composers, and she, as the only North American interpreter of his music, will appear with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra soon, when these works are initially introduced in this country.

Mrs. Lettie Osserman, chairman of Sisterhood's Annual Donor Spring Luncheon, asks that all the ladies send in their reservations as soon as possible. This is Sisterhood's only fund raising affair of the entire year. It will take place on March 31st at the Hotel Astor. The subscription is \$15.00 per person. Mrs. Dorothy Gellert is the Chairman of Gifts and has announced that there will be thirty-five valuable gifts given away. Incidentally, if you haven't your Treasure Book as yet, contact Mrs. Vici Wimpfheimer, who is co-chairman of the luncheon, or Mrs. Osserman.

The S.O.S. Drive continues and contributions of new or used clothing, canned foods, medical supplies, etc., are still needed. Please notify Mrs. Fan Greenstein if you want further particulars, or send your contributions to the Synagogue office. Remember, our brethren in Europe still need our help desperately.

Birth

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Martin Grodnick on the birth of their son, Leslie Mark; to Mr. and Mrs. Kosofsky (of the Religious School Staff) on the birth of a daughter.

Death

The Synagogue extends condolences to Mrs. Irving Friedman on the death of her mother, Mrs. Ethel Alper.

President's Address

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thodoxy and encouraged a synthesis between the Jewish heritage and the culture of the modern world. In this group there were a number of East European scholars, but two stood out as protagonists of the era of enlightenment, namely, Solomon Rappaport and Nachman Krochmal. The early reformers in German Jewry sought to enlist the cooperation of these East European scholars in their new undertaking and they invited Rappaport to one of their early conferences in Brunswick in 1844. His reply was magnificent: "For tearing down one does not need an architect,—a common day laborer will suffice." He refused to participate in their deliberations and their abnegation of historic Judaism.

In the light of the subsequent march of events which led to the almost wholesale assimilation of German Jewry and the cruel fate which overtook them during the Hitler regime, who appears as the prophet and realist so far as Jewish survival is concerned?

Our early reformers in this country—transplanted from Germany—went even further afield and they too failed to hold American Judaism to its moorings. In recent years, a new generation in reform Jewry is seeking to recapture its traditions and to become again an integral part of the household of Israel.

While there is no pure race,—and we Jews are no exception to this thesis,—I should like to refer to a work written by Ignatz Zollschan about a generation ago: *Die Juden als Rassenproblem*. In it he admits that we are not a pure race, yet, he states, if any group has a right to such a connotation, it is the Jewish group, whom he designates as an "inzuchts gruppe",—a relatively inbred group; in other words, a people.

Thus there are at least two factors inherent in the tradition of Judaism, namely, religion and peoplehood. Our old line reformers stress the first element, our secular nationalists emphasize the second. But our tradition is wider than either one of them. According to our sages, Israel, the law, and God are one, which stated in modern terms implies that peoplehood, culture, and faith together constitute the Jewish tradition.

I cannot conceive of the Jewish people as a purely secular group. The religious Hebraic note is a necessary part

of our tradition and is one of the chief reasons for our survival. Great empires have come and gone; Israel has survived only because of its ideals. They have no market value, they are not related to pomp and circumstance and power,—therefore they are eternal.

So my philosophy of Judaism includes the triad which has been the mainstay of our faith throughout our history. It is up to us as a congregation to further this historical concept of Judaism.

* * *

MANY years ago I read a volume by Dr. Richard C. Cabot, professor of medicine at Harvard University, who, in addition to being a great physician, was a splendid, religiously-minded soul. His book "*What Men Live By*" contained his formula for living. He called it the "Cross of Gold". This included work, play, love, and worship. Our Freudian friends would probably not subscribe to his thesis, but I do, and tonight I shall devote myself to the fourth element in this formula which concerns itself with the importance of religion in our lives,—and since this is a religious institution, what would be more fitting than for me to do so?

There is a real need for religion in the lives of all of us. When I speak of religion, I am not thinking in terms of an anthropomorphic Deity, but rather in terms of the great God concept which animates the thinking of a great many of our scientists,—Jeans, Eddington, Shapley, Eisenstein and others who speak of a cosmic God.

Man does not live by bread alone,—nor does he live by intellect alone. Our old physiological psychologists spoke of man as a thinking, willing, and feeling individual. The word religion, from its etymology, signifies the tying back of man to his Creator and his identification with the cosmic forces of the universe, which is ruled by immutable law.

The stressing of the importance of science alone is not enough. It may bestow upon us untold benefits in the way of physical comforts which add to the convenience of living, but science alone will fail to add anything to the discipline of life unless it is infused with the spirit of humility, sacrifice, and religious inspiration. Without these, science will destroy man and all his work,—witness the dangers inherent in the discovery of

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Postpone Symposium to Monday Eve., March 1st

Three Participants to Discuss "The Relationship Between American Jewry and the New Judea"

The Adult Education Committee has announced that the symposium on "The Relationship between American Jewry and the New Judea" has been postponed until Monday evening, March 1st. Mrs. Rose Schwefel, Lloyd Schaper and Moe Turman have been asked to serve as discussion leaders for the evening. This is in keeping with the policy of having Park Avenue Synagogue members actively participate in these events.

The symposium planned, will complete a series of lectures entitled "Blueprint for the New Jewish State" which the Adult Education Committee sponsored.

Feb. 15 Leap-Year Dance

The fourth dance of the season, the Leap Year Dance, will be presented by the Junior League on Sunday afternoon, February 15th, at 3:15 p.m. in the Vestry. The Misses Judith Klenert and Zelda Halprin and Dr. Joseph Blinderman are the co-chairmen of this affair. The admission charge will be \$1.25 and the music will again be provided by Jenö Bartal and his orchestra. Everyone is cordially invited to attend and enjoy the afternoon festivities. As usual the proceeds of this dance again will be given to charity.

The program committee has decided that this year's cocktail dance will be held in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Pierre on Sunday afternoon, April 18th. In conjunction with the dance, a handsome television set will be given away. Remember the date; further details of this affair will be announced shortly.

At the last meeting of the Junior Congregation, Robert Rifkind of Class 7Y in our Religious School was elected President and Ruth L. Kertzer of Class 4Y is the new Secretary.

Those who have attended four consecutive sessions will be eligible for membership in the Junior Congregation.

President's Address

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the atom bomb. Albert Einstein once stated that the intellect has a sharp eye for tools and methods, but it is blind to moral ends and values and therefore not to be trusted too deeply.

We hail the march of science and applaud the search for truth, but it would appear to me that the scientist who discovers truth has had a revelation of the Divine order in the universe, and that therefore there need be no conflict between religion and science such as agitated the minds of previous generations. On the contrary, science and true religion are not incompatible,—they rather supplement each other in the affairs of men. The true scientist approaches the universe in a spirit of humility. The greater his knowledge, the more conscious is he of the infinity of our ignorance.

The religious approach to life must be not only congregational, but also individual. Alfred North Whitehead put it very well when he spoke of religion as what a man does with his solitariness. The old Hebrew sages referred likewise to mystic isolation with Deity as the acme of religious experience (*hithbodeduth*).

The motto of my own alma mater, New York University, stresses the importance of religion. It is a verse from Ecclesiastes, namely, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". By fear is not meant the fear of the immature child, but rather reverence for this mighty universe and all the works of God in it.

* * *

ONE must not be lost in ritual, although this is important for the expression of the mood of religious experience and the concretization of the God idea.

And so, in the spirit of Judaism, I would quote from Joseph Auslander, the great American poet, himself a product of his Jewish heritage; in his "The Unconquerables" he says: "In a world of jittery material values, it is wholesome to anchor our souls to the fact that there are certain things which do not change, which cannot be bought and sold over the counter, which have never gone off the gold standard, namely, God and nature and the virtues of the human heart.

Grant that the machine is formidable and efficient; that it does the work of many men; that it can lift mountains.

"Yet it cannot feed man's longings, redeem him from despair, or answer his questions. These require faith and hope and courage—which, having no weight in themselves, can lift more than mountains, for they can lift the heavy human heart."

This congregation represents, in its leadership and in its membership, a group of us who wish to combine tradition and progress, free intellect and faith, preserving as much of our heritage as possible, but coming to grips with the modern age. In the words of the late Rabbi Kook of Palestine, "The old shall be renewed, and the new shall be sanctified."

It is our hope that under the leadership of congregations like ours there may develop an American Judaism which will abandon both iconoclastic reform and extreme, uncompromising orthodoxy, and bring forth, through wide and continuous Jewish education of our people, both adults and children, a catholic or universal Israel,—in the sense of Solomon Shechter. American Israel will then seek inspiration from a rejuvenated Palestine and fructify Palestinian Judaism with the gifts of a flourishing diaspora. May it be ours to witness the realization of our hopes.

Ye BULLETIN Staff would be interested in having some member of the Congregation solve the enigma of the missing names on the marble plaques at the vestry entrance—who was the chiseler?

THE PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE

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